

## CLEANSING AND MASSAGING UTENSIL

The present invention relates, in general, to a utensil for cleansing and massaging a skin surface. More particularly, this invention provides a utensil having improved cleansing members for effectively cleaning and massaging the scalp.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A typical daily hygiene regimen includes cleansing the skin and hair with the aid of soaps and/or shampoos. Shampoos for the hair, in particular, are available in a variety of brands and formulations for the purpose of enhancing the appearance/condition of the hair. While some shampoos are specifically designed to treat scalp conditions such as dandruff and psoriasis, routine cleansing and massaging of the scalp is often ignored or attended to in an inconsistent manner.

It is widely accepted that proper scalp cleansing can prevent many of the factors which contribute to and/or aggravate such conditions as dandruff and psoriasis. Moreover, scalp stimulation increases blood flow to the scalp which has been shown to be beneficial in those with thinning and/or unhealthy hair. However, presently, proper scalp cleansing is often overlooked absent a medical condition such as the type mentioned above.

For example, a typical hair cleansing routine consists of a small amount of shampoo being applied by hand to the hair surface where the shampoo may or may not be worked into the hair root area with the fingers. As such, cleansing and/or massaging of the scalp is not uniformly or effectively done, and depending on hair thickness and cleansing habits of some, may not be done at all.

Accordingly, there is a need for a hair utensil to effectively massage and cleanse the scalp for use during routine hygienic activities.

## SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an objective of the invention to provide a utensil having improved cleansing members for effectively cleaning and massaging the scalp. The utensil for cleansing and massaging skin includes, a body and a plurality of branched bristle bundles.

- 5 The plurality of branched bristle bundles extend outward from a pedestal portion attached to the body. The branched bristle bundles are grouped together to form cleansing members. The cleansing members have a centermost portion in which the bristle lengths are shorter relative to the outermost bristle lengths.

- 10 In a further objective of the invention a utensil for cleansing and massaging skin is provided, including, a body and a plurality of body members. An elevated branched pedestal extends outward from each of the body members and each branch of the pedestals has an elevated surface. A plurality of branched bristle bundles extending outward from the body members, the branched bristle bundles being grouped together to form cleansing members, the cleansing members have a centermost portion in which the bristle lengths are shorter relative to the outermost bristle lengths.

In still a further aspect of the invention, at least one ring element is secured to the body. The ring element includes bristles along a surface thereof for cleansing the scalp during use.

- 20 It is another objective of the invention to provide a body having a facing surface. The body includes a plurality of recessed depressions therein and a plurality of balls housed in a corresponding one of the recessed depressions. The balls are rotatably suspended within the recessed depressions and each ball has a portion protruding from a corresponding one of the recessed depressions for contacting and rotating about the skin surface.

- 25 It is to be understood that both the foregoing general description of the invention and the following detailed description are exemplary, but are not restrictive, of the invention.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWING

The invention is best understood from the following detailed description when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a cleansing and massaging utensil in  
5 accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a side view of the cleansing and massaging member of the utensil of  
FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side view of a cleansing and massaging member having three  
branched bristle bundles;

FIG. 4 is a side view of a cleansing and massaging member having four  
branched bristle bundles;

FIG. 5 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the invention in  
accordance with the present invention;

FIG. 6 is an enlarged view of a ring element of the cleansing and massaging  
utensil of the exemplary embodiment as shown by inset 6 of FIG. 5;

FIG. 7 is side profile taken along lines 7 of FIG. 6;

FIG. 8 is a side view of the exemplary embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 9 is an enlarged view of a ring element of the exemplary embodiment of  
the invention as shown by inset 9 of FIG. 8;

FIG. 10 is a front view of the ring element of the exemplary embodiment of  
the invention taken along lines 10 of FIG. 9;

FIG. 11 is a front of an exemplary embodiment of the invention showing ring  
element anchors;

FIG. 12 is an enlarged view of a ring element of the exemplary embodiment of  
the invention as shown by inset 12 of FIG. 11;

FIG. 13 is side profile of a ring element taken along lines 13 of FIG. 12;

FIG. 14 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 15 is a front perspective of a cleansing and massaging element in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the invention;

5           FIG. 16 is a front view of a cleansing and massaging utensil in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 17 is an enlarged view of a cleansing and massaging element in accordance with the exemplary embodiment as shown by inset 17 of FIG. 16;

10           FIG. 18 is a side profile of a cleansing and massaging element in accordance with the exemplary embodiment as taken along line 18 of FIG. 17;

FIG. 19 is a front view of a cleansing and massaging utensil in accordance with an exemplary embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 20 is an enlarged view of a cleansing and massaging element in accordance with the exemplary embodiment as shown by inset 20 of FIG. 19;

15           FIG. 21 is a side profile of a cleansing and massaging element in accordance with the exemplary embodiment as taken along line 21 of FIG. 20; and

FIG. 22 is a front view of a cleansing and massaging element in accordance with the exemplary embodiment as taken along line 22 of FIG. 21.

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## DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

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Certain terminology used in the following description is for convenience only and is not limiting. The words "right," "left," "lower," and "upper" designate directions in the drawings to which reference is made. The words "inwardly" and "outwardly" refer to directions toward and away from, respectively, the geometric center of the hygienic utensil in accordance with the present invention., and designated parts thereof. The terminology includes the words noted above as well as derivatives thereof and words of similar import.

The term "cleansing and massaging member" is generally defined as the portions of the utensil contacting the scalp during use.

The hygienic utensil or "brush" described herein employs cleansing and massaging members provided for use as an aid in the daily cleansing of human scalps and/or skin. It is recognized by those skilled in the art that the present invention is not limited to a specific application and can be readily employed on other areas of the body or used for general cleansing purposes.

Referring now to the drawings in detail, wherein like numerals indicate like elements throughout, there is shown in Figs. 1-22, a hygienic utensil, generally designated 10 in accordance with the present invention. The hygienic utensil 10 is provided for cleansing and massaging an area of skin, preferably the scalp during shampooing. In the preferred embodiment, the body 12 of the utensil 10 is formed of a rigid material such as a thermoplastic or wood and employs a plurality of cleansing and massaging members 15. The body 12 may be contoured to adapt to rounded portions of skin such as the scalp. In an alternative embodiment, the body 12 may be an elastomeric sleeve and/or glove to be worn on the hand of a user such that the user's hand can readily adapt to an irregular surface.

In an exemplary embodiment shown in Fig. 1, a portion of the utensil 10 (shown cut-away) employs a plurality of cleansing and massaging members 15 fixedly mounted to pedestals 21 which are fixedly mounted to individual body members, generally designated 12a. Body members 12a, while shown as elongated portions of utensil structure, may be areas of an essentially planar utensil 10. In this embodiment, each cleansing and massaging member 15 is a plurality of bristle bundles 16. Each bristle 18 of each bundle 16 is preferably elongated in shape and constructed of nylon and/or thermoplastic material. In the exemplary embodiment, the bristle bundles 16 are branched for maximizing the footprint of the cleansing and massaging member upon contact to a surface. It is recognized by those skilled in the art that many suitable bristle materials exist for providing different levels of structural rigidity to each bristle 18. For example, in alternative embodiments, any number of bristle bundles 16 can be arranged to form a cleansing and massaging member 15 as shown in Figs 2-4.

The branched bristle bundles 15 are mounted upon elevated pedestals 21. In an exemplary embodiment, pedestals 21 are constructed of an elastomeric material such as

rubber so as not to irritate the scalp upon contact. While the pedestals 21 are shown in Figs. 1-4 as having a generally planar facing surface for receiving bristle bundles 16, it is recognized by those skilled in the art that the pedestal facing surface may employ a branched facing surface or a contoured or curved surface, for adjusting the mounting elevation and/or orientation of bristle bundles 16.

As shown in FIGS. 1-4, each cleansing and massaging member 15 is formed of bristle bundles 16. Each bundle 16 of bristles 18 are provided to have differing lengths of bristles 18, preferably the bundles 16 of bristles 18 are arranged so that the centermost portion of the cleansing and massaging members 15 have bristles 18 of a shorter length relative to the outermost bristles 18.

In using the exemplary embodiment of FIGS. 1-4, pressure is placed on the utensil 10 by a user to cleanse the scalp, the bristles 18 are biased outwardly with respect to the center of the bristle bundles 15 to allow the shorter bristles to contact the scalp surface.

Referring now to FIG. 5, an exemplary embodiment of the utensil 10 is shown employing ring elements 25. Ring elements 25 employ bristles 27 which are shown in FIG. 6 as extending from an annular facing surface of ring element 25. In the exemplary embodiment, ring elements 25 are constructed of an elastomeric material such as rubber, however those skilled in the art recognize that any number of flexible materials may be utilized. Moreover while ring elements 25 are shown as having only a single facing surface employing bristles 27, those skilled in the art recognize that any number of ring element surfaces may employ bristles 27 such as those shown along the side annular surface of FIGS. 8-10.

Ring elements 25 of FIGS. 5-7 are secured to the utensil 10 by looping them through apertures created in the utensil (not shown). The ring elements 25 are provided to rotate and scrub the skin such as the scalp in use by freely moving through the utensil aperture.

As shown in Fig. 10, the ring element may be constructed of an elastomeric annular ring 31 secured to a foam or sponge-like base material 33. The sponge material 33 being utilized for delivering shampoos and/or soaps and for removing moisture from the surface being cleansed.

In the exemplary embodiments of FIGS. 11-13 ring elements 25 are secured to utensil 10 by anchor portions 29. The anchor portions 29 provide apertures external to the utensil 10, such that where the utensil 10 is a glove, the rotation of the ring elements 25 is not interfered by a user's hand/and or fingers inside the glove.

5 In the exemplary embodiment of FIG. 14, both ring elements 25 and cleansing and massaging members 15 are utilized with utensil 10. It is recognized by those skilled in the art that the number, arrangement, and/or orientation of ring elements 25 and cleansing and massaging members 15 is a matter of design choice.

10 FIG. 15 shows a utensil 10 having a body 12 in the shape of an ovoid base, the utensil 10 is designed to be gripped in the palm of the hand for use in intense scrubbing applications, such as the shampooing of an animal.

15 In an embodiment shown in Figs 16-18, a hygienic utensil, generally designated 10 is shown in accordance with the present invention. The hygienic utensil 10 is provided for cleansing and massaging an area of skin, preferably the scalp during shampooing. In the preferred embodiment, the body 12 of the utensil 10 is formed of a rigid material such as a thermoplastic or wood and employs a plurality of cleansing and massaging members 15. It is recognized by those skilled in the art that a flexible body 12 may be utilized for adapting the shape of the utensil 10 to irregular surfaces.

20 In this embodiment, the massaging and cleansing members 15 are resilient balls 40. The resilient balls 40 are constructed of an elastomeric material such as rubber. The balls are housed in a corresponding one of a recessed depression 45 in the body 12 (shown as a body member 12a in the Figs.) As shown in FIGS. 17-18, the balls 40 are rotatably suspended within each of the recessed depressions 45 such that a portion 40a of the balls 40 protrude from the depressions 45 to contact the skin surface when in use. In the  
25 exemplary embodiment, the exterior surface of the balls 40 have an irregular surface for use in cleansing. The recessed depressions are typically about 10% greater in circumference than the circumference of the balls 40 for providing unobstructed rotation. Preferably, the balls protrude from the surface of the body 12 by a distance of 2/8 of an inch.

30 In an alternative embodiment, shown in Fig. 19-22, the balls 40 are seated in the depression 45 by a flange plate 64 which frictionally biases the balls 40 against bearings 55 for providing ball rotation in a manner typical to that of a computer mouse.

Although illustrated and described above with reference to certain specific embodiments, the present invention is nevertheless not intended to be limited to the details shown. Rather, various modifications may be made in the details within the scope and range of equivalents of the claims and without departing from the spirit of the invention.